

The Cooperative Threat Reduction Program and Russian-American  
Relations in the Late 1990s: Power vs. Institutions

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Mr. General Secretary. Though my pronunciation may give you difficulty, the maxim is: 'Doveryai, no proveryai! Trust but verify!'

-U.S. President Ronald Reagan  
December 8, 1987

The Nunn-Lugar program has withstood the test of time in this often volatile post-Cold War environment. It has weathered many political, military, and social storms. It is clear that cooperative nonproliferation efforts [are] the basis of the bilateral relationship.

-Senator Richard G. Lugar  
December 13, 1999

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## I

## INTRODUCTION

**A Scenario**

December 1999. Russian ground and air forces tighten their stranglehold on the Chechen capital of Grozny. Graphic images of civilian, rebel, and even Russian military casualties make their way into the Western media outlets. Despite the fact that Chechnya is geographically a part of sovereign Russia, the United States government stridently protests what it considers to be the wholesale slaughter and displacement of the Chechen people. The Russian President ignores these pleas, citing several terrorist acts allegedly committed by Chechens in Moscow earlier in the year.

At the same time, a 10-person American team from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) arrives at Sheremetyevo-2 airport in Moscow to begin a two-week Audit and Examination (A&E) of export control equipment and facilities provided under the auspices of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program (CTR). Immediately upon arrival, the team is met by American Embassy personnel and told that the mission has been scrapped along with any further CTR funding or assistance until the differences over the conflict in Chechnya are resolved.

While recent events make the aforementioned scenario plausible, CTR funding was neither suspended, nor were any A&E teams recalled in connection with this political quandary. Moreover, CTR, also referred to as the Nunn-Lugar Act after the legislation's co-sponsors, has weathered the often-stormy political and strategic partnership between the United States and Russia since the 1991 demise of the Soviet Union.

As the Soviet Union began to disintegrate in August 1991, the remainder of the 1990s represented an opportunity to forge a new relationship between Russia and the United States built upon mutual trust, cooperation, and transparency, ultimately realizing former President George Bush's vision of a "new world order."

Perhaps no other facet of bilateral Russian-American relations has relied upon these principles more so than control over the vast nuclear stockpiles amassed during the Cold War. DTRA, originally called the On-Site Inspection Agency (OSIA) and established by President Reagan in 1988, pioneered cooperative arms control verification with the Soviet Union. Moreover, treaties such as the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), signed in Moscow mere weeks before the Soviet dissolution, expanded the conduit for unprecedented arms cuts in the Soviet and American nuclear arsenals.

Subsequently, the Nunn-Lugar Act, first labeled the Soviet Nuclear Threat Reduction Act of 1991, further facilitated crucial assistance in dismantling and safeguarding these arsenals based on direct civilian, military, and private business contacts, financial assistance, and cooperation between Russian and American arms control experts. In 1995, the former political and military adversaries possessed all the tools requisite for significant arms control progress. "By late February 1995, the United States had proposed \$503 million for projects in Russia. Most of the . . . projects are dedicated to . . . the elimination of strategic offensive arms. . . . Of the funds authorized by Congress, \$300 million had actually been obligated to projects in Russia . . ."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rodney W. Jones and Mark G. McDonough, *Tracking Nuclear Proliferation: A Guide in Maps and Charts*, 1998 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1998), 27.

But, in recent years, cracks have appeared in the Russian-American relationship. Sensitive issues including NATO expansion and Russian-Chinese rapprochement, as well as diametrically opposed interests such as the mutually unpopular conflicts in Kosovo and Chechnya have called into question the nature of Russian-American relations. Indeed, recent draft Russian military doctrine explicitly identifies the West as a threat to Russian national security. "In a reflection of Moscow's increasingly belligerent mood and its souring relations with the West, the new document also said attempts by the United States to dominate international affairs are a threat to Russia's national security."<sup>2</sup> Despite these developments, the arms control professionals serving under the auspices of CTR have continued their mission unabated.

### **CTR: Explaining the Success**

Hence, the purpose of this paper is to examine the nature of the operational-level relationships between American arms control representatives and their Russian counterparts in direct contrast to the recently deteriorating political relationship between their respective states. The paper specifically focuses on the program that provides arms control dismantlement, inspection, verification, assistance and monitoring: CTR.

An examination of CTR's success is critical for three distinct reasons. First, the Russian-American relationship remains (along with the Russian-Chinese and U.S.-Chinese relationships) one of the most important bilateral relationships in the world.

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<sup>2</sup> Brian Whitmore, "New Russian Policy Allows First Strike," *The Boston Globe*, 15 January 2000, 1 [article online]; available from [http://www.boston.com/bg\\_archives/newarch.cgi](http://www.boston.com/bg_archives/newarch.cgi); accessed 15 January 2000.

Further understanding of but one of its many facets facilitates improved relations between the two great powers vis-à-vis an increase in mutual interests and the reduction of political and military friction.

Second, despite the tremendous progress made in the arms control regime, much work remains. The Russian nuclear arsenal, by all accounts, is far from secure. Consider the “loose suitcase nukes” testimony before a United States Congressional delegation by former Russian General Aleksandr Lebed:

In a meeting with a US Congressional delegation in May 1997, and again in an interview broadcast on *60 Minutes* on 7 September 1997, Lebed claimed that the Soviet Union had created perhaps one hundred atomic demolition munitions (ADMs), or atomic land mines. These low-yield (circa 1 kiloton) devices were to be used by special forces for wartime sabotage and thus were small, portable, and not equipped with standard safety devices to prevent unauthorized detonation. According to Lebed, some of the ADMs were deployed in the former Soviet republics, and might not have been returned to Russia after the Soviet Union's collapse.<sup>3</sup>

While these allegations have never been independently confirmed, neither has the Russian government been able to satisfactorily explain them away. Combined with the seizure of smuggled Russian fissile materials by European customs officials, the continued pace of dismantling the Russian nuclear arsenal, and the decaying Russian fissile materials storage capability, Lebed's claim indicates that nuclear proliferation from within Russia remains a tangible threat. Therefore the U.S. cannot allow CTR to turn into a symbolic “stick” by which the U.S. can punish undesirable Russian behavior.

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<sup>3</sup> John Lepingwell and Scott Parrish, *Are Suitcase Nukes on the Loose? The Story Behind the Controversy*, [report on-line] (Monterey: Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, July 1998), 1; available from <http://cns.miis.edu/pubs/reports/lebedst.htm>; accessed 24 March 2000.

Also, the inspectors and liaisons on both sides of the arms control table throughout the 1990s likely include potential senior civilian and military leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As such, these leaders are positioned to glean both the experience of negotiating and working with their counterparts as well as a unique insight into the other country's mentality, disposition, and idiosyncrasies.

Finally, lessons learned from an examination of CTR's success in the conditions of an adverse political climate can serve as a template for more effective execution of current and future Russian-American relations.

The main premise of this paper contends that the deterioration in Russian-American relations due to balance of power politics at the state-level did not significantly affect the CTR Program from 1995 through 1999, owing to the mutual security interests and network of formal and informal contacts provided by the institution of CTR. A subordinate premise states that the benefits of direct contacts vis-à-vis the CTR Program significantly increase the likelihood of the program's successful outcome.

### **Overview**

While balance of power politics explains the recent decline in Russian-American relations, it does not fully account for CTR's success. Institutional theory provides a prism through which to examine the CTR Program further, facilitating an analysis of the differences between the state and operational levels of Russian-American relations. Throughout, the paper analyzes the Russian-American relationship on both levels bearing in mind the following questions:



1. Why has the CTR Program continued to operate successfully in the face of increasingly adverse Russian-American political relations? Is the primary issue one of cooperation or balance of power?
2. Is there a fundamental difference between the relationship of Russian-American arms control representatives and the relationship of each states' arbiters of power?
3. Overall, does the state of Russian-American political relations suggest similar trends for arms control progress (can the two be linked)?
4. What political theory/set of theories best explains any differences in Russian-American relations at the two levels (state and CTR levels)?
5. What do the findings suggest for future arms control efforts by the world's two largest nuclear weapons states? What is the future role of CTR? Are program changes necessary?

The paper is presented in four major parts beginning with the introductory scenario and premises. Part two presents the history of Russia-American relations from 1995-99 together with a brief analysis of the trends and causal factors therein. Next, part three similarly examines the track record of CTR throughout the same time period, introducing institutional theory and epistemic communities as they pertain to the transnational contacts embedded within the institution of CTR. Finally, part four concludes with the paper's findings and recommendations.

## II

## RUSSIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS IN DECLINE: 1995-1999

In the first half of the 1990s, Russian American relations held the promise of a new partnership based upon relief from all quarters that the Cold War had passed without igniting a large-scale conflict.

After the demise of the Soviet Union in December 1991, the Bush administration immediately reached out to Russian President Boris Yeltsin, promising aid, encouraging liberal economic and political reforms, and negotiating new security arrangements. During this honeymoon period from 1992 to mid-1993, . . . Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev steered Russia toward accommodation and cooperation with the West. Russia followed U.S. policy on high-technology transfers, . . . accepted a junior role in resolving the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, and acceded to stringent economic requirements in order to receive foreign aid.<sup>4</sup>

This euphoric state of relations between the nuclear behemoths, however, was destined to deteriorate in 1993-94 to a more pragmatic condition. Moreover, a more substantial decline in the relationship appeared in 1995, a decline that would continue through the end of the decade.

This chapter first illustrates the decline year-by-year, utilizing five evaluation criteria. These criteria, or measures of Russian-American relations, are humanitarian issues, Russian political shifts, NATO expansion, International Monetary Fund (IMF) activity, and a fifth criteria consisting of other critical factors. The second part examines the underlying reasons for the decline utilizing principles of balance of power politics.

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<sup>4</sup> John Feffer, "In Focus: U.S.-Russian Relations: Avoiding a Cold Peace," *Foreign Policy in Focus* 1, no. 15, [article online] (November 1996), 1; available from <http://foreignpolicy-infocus.org/briefs/vol1/RUSSIA.html>.

## 1995

*Humanitarian Issues.* Beginning in December of 1994 and continuing throughout 1995, the Russian government prosecuted a war against separatist rebels in the ethnic republic of Chechnya, located in the Caucasus. “No issue dramatized the shift in Russian politics—both domestic and foreign—as the war in Chechnia, which erupted in December 1994.”<sup>5</sup> To the Russians, the issue constituted a simple question of preserving the sovereignty of the Russian Federation. But the West, in particular the U.S., was vehemently opposed “. . . to the killing of civilians and indiscriminate bombing in the capital city of Grozny.”<sup>6</sup> While the U.S. never formally protested Russia’s actions in Chechnya in 1995, a perceptible chill settled upon Russian-American relations.

*Russian Politics.* Another shift in Russian-American relations materialized in the waning days of 1995 during the State Duma elections. “In the elections to the Duma in December 1995, the largest number of seats went to the Communist party, who with their allies control 40 percent of the seats.”<sup>7</sup> Not only did this election help to propel the Communist leader, Gennady Zyuganov, into a prominent position as Boris Yeltsin’s main rival, but also gave rise to increased anti-Western rhetoric within the Duma.

*NATO Expansion.* The controversial subject of the eastward expansion of NATO, an alliance originally born out of the necessity to defend against Soviet expansionism,

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<sup>5</sup> Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Noguee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*, (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1998), 200.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Layard and John Parker, *The Coming Russian Boom: A Guide to New Markets and Politics*, (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 330.

began to register on Russia's political "radar screen" in 1995. While no formal invitations had yet been issued, the alliance remained open to the idea of new member-states. President Yeltsin could only hope to minimize the effects of impending NATO expansion.

As it became increasingly evident in 1995 that NATO expansion was inexorable, Moscow focused on the preconditions which it would demand for acquiescing to the inevitable. . . . And NATO, while willing to offer some assurances on the deployment of bases and nuclear weapons in Europe, was unprepared to formalize any substantive concessions.<sup>8</sup>

Despite Washington's attempts to sell NATO expansion as gradual and non-threatening to Russian security, the issue would remain contentious through the end of the decade.

*IMF.* Another crucial area of interaction between Russia and the West is the IMF. While the U.S. does not control the IMF exclusively, U.S. support is an influential factor in IMF loan calculus. Early talks in 1995 regarding IMF loans totaling \$6.2 billion stalled over Western concerns about Russia's high inflation rate and growing budget deficit. Then the IMF announced in March that it would grant the loans, albeit under the conditions of greater fiscal controls.<sup>9</sup> Despite receiving the much-needed aid, elements of the Russian government, press, and even society-at-large began to view the restrictions as a kind of Western political control over Russia.

*Other Factors.* In 1995, one positive aspect of the relationship surfaced in the form of Russia's willingness to participate in the Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia

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<sup>8</sup> Donaldson and Noguee, 216.

<sup>9</sup> M. Wesley Shoemaker, *Russia, Eurasian States, and Eastern Europe 1998*, 29<sup>th</sup> ed., (Harpers Ferry, W. Va.: Stryker-Post Publications, 1998), 99-100.

alongside NATO troops. However, Russia simultaneously began to look elsewhere in order to generate revenues from the sale of excess military equipment left over from the Cold War. "The strategy involved . . . the intensification of relations with Iran, to which the Russians were already supplying several kinds of conventional military equipment, including, as of January 1995, two Kilo-class attack submarines."<sup>10</sup>

### 1996

*Humanitarian Issues.* 1996 found Russian troops further embroiled in a total war in Chechnya, ineffectually prosecuted, resulting in nearly 100,000 casualties, all Russian citizens. The conflict had become so unpopular domestically and internationally that ending it became inextricably linked to the 1996 Russian presidential campaign. After winning the election, Yeltsin appointed retired General Aleksandr Lebed to the post of Security Council chief. Lebed subsequently negotiated a peace settlement ending the conflict of the last two years in a virtual political stalemate. Despite this peace settlement, the issue remained a stressor on relations with the West due to graphic evidence of the resultant carnage in the Caucasian republic.

*Russian Politics.* Two political events negatively impacted Russian-American relations in 1996. The first was Yeltsin's December 1995 dismissal of Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev in favor of Yevgeny Primakov, a former Soviet apparatchik. The ouster of Kozyrev marked a *de facto* shift in the previously pro-Western Yeltsin administration.

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<sup>10</sup> Coit D. Blacker, "Russia and the West," in *The New Russian Foreign Policy*, ed. Michael Mandelbaum, (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1998), 181.

“As one of the longest-serving members of the administration, Kozyrev came to symbolize better than anyone else the liberal, democratic, and pro-Western features of Yeltsin’s presidency.”<sup>11</sup>

The other event was the 1996 Russian presidential election itself. Although the eventual outcome of the election was viewed favorably by the U. S. government (Yeltsin remained the best hope for continued democratic reforms in contrast to the Communist party candidate), Zyuganov’s 40 percent of the popular vote indicated a societal longing for the stability provided by the old order. Moreover, U.S. support was not entirely welcomed in Russia. “The . . . endorsement . . . of even the most outrageous practices of the Russian government has succeeded in bringing many among the Russian . . . population to perceive the United States as a malevolent foe.”<sup>12</sup> A secondary negative effect of the 1996 election was an erosion of confidence brought on by frequent public images of Boris Yeltsin’s flagging health. “A recorded two-minute television appeal by the president on 1 July [1996] did nothing to dispel the rumors, for he appeared to be under heavy medication or to have suffered a stroke.”<sup>13</sup> Yeltsin’s apparent incapacitation, combined with his near-loss in the 1996 election, only heightened Western reservations about Russia’s future at Yeltsin’s hand.

*NATO Expansion.* NATO expansion continued to generate political friction

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<sup>11</sup> Donaldson and Noguee, 202.

<sup>12</sup> Testimony of Ariel Cohen before the U.S. Congress House International Relations Committee, *How the West Lost the Battle for Russia’s Future*, 17 September 1998, 4 [transcript online]; available from <http://www.heritage.org/insiderussia/updates/testimony091798.htm>.

<sup>13</sup> Originally reported in *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2 July 1996 as quoted by Stephen White, Richard Rose, and Ian McAllister, *How Russia Votes*, (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers, Inc., 1997), 265.

between Russia and the West for three reasons. First, Yevgeny Primakov, the new Russian Foreign Minister continued to maneuver for concessions in light of the looming eastward NATO expansion. Second, Aleksandr Lebed soundly rejected U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's proposal for a NATO-Russian Charter because Lebed wanted a legally binding document. Finally, President Bill Clinton announced that the new NATO members would be selected in mid-1997.<sup>14</sup> These three events represented a divergence of Russian-American interests not witnessed since the Cold War's end.

*IMF.* In 1996, the IMF provided Russia with over \$10 billion in loans. The loans, however, were linked to significant economic reforms, which never materialized.<sup>15</sup> The Yeltsin government's *modus operandi* with regard to IMF loans appears to have been temporal, ignoring the set conditions and staving off real economic reforms in favor of a "paycheck-to-paycheck" existence.

*Other Factors.* The Russian government had long since reserved the right to influence events in the Near Abroad, those republics sharing common borders with the Russian Federation. Since the 1991 Soviet demise, Russian troops had conducted combat and/or peacekeeping operations in Moldova, Tajikistan, Georgia, and Nagorno-Karabakh. And on 2 April 1996, Russia and Belarus inked a treaty to create a "Community of Sovereign Republics."<sup>16</sup> Western analysts feared this treaty represented the potential first step in constructing a new Russian empire akin to the old Warsaw Pact.

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<sup>14</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the events described, see Donaldson and Noguee, 216-7.

<sup>15</sup> Shoemaker, 100.

<sup>16</sup> Donaldson and Noguee, 169.

**1997-98**

*Humanitarian Issues.* With the cessation of hostilities in Chechnya and subsequent withdrawal of Russian troops, a fragile peace prevailed. But the relationship between Moscow and Grozny remained awkward and unsettled. The Russian government allowed the Chechen government to administer the republic; but Chechnya had neither achieved independence from Moscow nor international recognition.

Another wedge between Russia and the West in 1997-8 was the question of the human rights of Russians living in the Near Abroad, particularly those residing in the Baltic States. For years the Baltic governments had tied citizenship rights to the ability to speak the national language (Latvian, Lithuanian, or Estonian). But now, in light of Western scrutiny regarding the Baltics as potential candidates for NATO membership, this phenomenon began to change.

In response to this pressure from Western governments and international organizations, Estonia and Latvia in 1998 liberalized their citizenship requirements; Russian children born in these countries after 1991 (the date of independence) will become citizens almost automatically, and the number of Russians who can be certified for the national language requirement has been increased.<sup>17</sup>

This policy change brought about two different attitudes in Russia's demeanor with the West. The first was a relaxation, however slight, on the question of the rights of ethnic Russians in the Baltics. The second, unintended, effect was Russia's concern that the Baltics were merely acquiescing to the demand in order to position themselves for future NATO membership, which would bring the alliance to Russia's border.

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<sup>17</sup> James Kurth, "The Baltics: Between Russia and the West," *Current History* 98, no. 630 (October 1999): 338.



*Russian Politics.* In March 1998 Yeltsin surprised Russians and Westerners alike by dismissing Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and selecting as his replacement a relative youngster in Sergei Kirienko. Although Kirienko's service was substantively unremarkable, it was his abrupt selection and dismissal less than six months later that intensified U.S. concerns about Yeltsin's viability as a leader. By late 1999, Yeltsin would have turned over the post of Prime Minister five times in under two years.

Additionally, Yevgeny Primakov, the Russian Foreign Minister since December 1995, pursued Russian interests in directions other than the West:

[Russia] had to find its own sets of partners and friends, including India, China, and Iran. This approach was not diametrically opposed to United States interests, but it would not be subordinate to them. Primakov embarked on a series of high profile and unilateral steps, as in his personal intervention in the Iraqi crises in 1997 to prevent United States-led military strikes.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, "Primakovism" helped answer critics at home who wondered where Russia's place as a superpower lay, but at the price of perplexing, if not alienating, the West.

*NATO Expansion.* In May 1997, NATO and Russia signed the "Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation, and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation," an act which would at least give Russia a voice in European security affairs, if not a vote. The Founding Act seemed an inconsequential olive branch to Russia when considered alongside formal invitations to join NATO issued to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic later in July. NATO would now include states previously part of Russia's traditional Eastern European buffer zone. Additionally, the controversial

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<sup>18</sup>Sherman W. Garnett, "A Nation in Search of its Place," *Current History* 98, no. 630 (October 1999): 329.

Partnership for Peace (PfP) program likely exacerbated Russian feelings of NATO's encroachment onto former Soviet soil. "Projected joint military exercises of forces from the United States and the Central Asian nations scheduled for September [1997] in Kazakstan and Uzbekistan are certain to be perceived in Moscow as a deliberate provocation . . ."<sup>19</sup>

*IMF.* After a year of Russian stock market doldrums following the Asian market problems of 1997, the summer of 1998 provided a shocking reminder of the fragility of a young Russian economy no longer rooted in its traditional military-industrial base but not yet adequately diversified in broader markets.

In May 1998 the Russian economy nearly collapsed after investors panicked. In the U.S., the Clinton administration strongly lobbied the IMF to bail Russia out of the crisis with a new loan package. In July, the IMF board approved a new package of \$22.5 billion with the expressed purpose of maintaining the value of the ruble. Despite Yeltsin's assurances that the ruble would not be devalued, the currency collapsed in late August. The ruble quickly devalued over 300 percent; inflation rose 15 percent in one week in August and then 30 percent in September.<sup>20</sup> Ironically, U.S. actions on behalf of Russia to secure the 1998 IMF package actually contributed to the ruble meltdown, resulting in the firing of a true economic reformer, Prime Minister Sergei Kirienko.

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<sup>19</sup> Richard Pipes, "Is Russia Still an Enemy?," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 5 (September/October 1997) : 78.

<sup>20</sup> This paragraph synthesizes the events from May 1998 through September 1998 in Cohen, 5.

*Other Factors.* In August 1998 two American embassies (in Kenya and Tanzania) were targets of bombings, allegedly carried out at the behest of terrorist Osama bin Laden. Three days after these bombings, the U.S. launched retaliatory cruise-missile strikes against bin Laden's terrorist camps in Afghanistan and a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan. The Russian government's response to the retaliatory strikes was critical of the U.S. action against third party, sovereign nations. Nevertheless, the Clinton-Yeltsin summit in Moscow the following week proceeded as planned, albeit with added strain.

### 1999

*Humanitarian Issues.* The chief humanitarian debacle of 1999 in Russia materialized in the form of renewed conflict in Chechnya. A feeble, beleaguered President Yeltsin, at the helm of a country struggling to define its purpose domestically and abroad, found a cause by which to rally Russian nationalistic fervor. The Russian government blamed Chechen rebels for incursions into Dagestan as well as series of late-summer explosions in Moscow that left hundreds of people dead. Russia began an offensive campaign into Chechnya in early October that has resulted in the virtual destruction the capital city Grozny, heavy Chechen and Russian casualties, repeated condemnation by the U.S. and the West, and has dragged on into the new year.

*Russian Politics.* The rise of Vladimir Putin, handpicked by Yeltsin to replace Sergei Stepashin as Prime Minister, has been nothing short of meteoric. A young, former Colonel in the KGB, Putin headed the *Federal'naya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti* (FSB) prior to his appointment as Prime Minister. Putin, the primary architect of the second war in

Chechnya, capitalized on luck, timing, and loyalty to Yeltsin when he assumed the mantle of the Presidency upon Yeltsin's surprise resignation on 31 December.

*NATO Expansion.* The NATO military operation in Kosovo against the Serb forces of Slobodan Milosevic significantly widened the gap in Russian-American relations. Russia vehemently protested NATO involvement in an extraterritorial action against its Slavic brethren. Relations withered to the point that large anti-American demonstrations and even several attacks against the American Embassy occurred in Moscow. Young Russian men fervently volunteered to serve (but did not actually participate in operations) with the Serbs against the NATO "aggressors."

From 23-25 April, NATO held its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary summit in Washington, simultaneously welcoming the three newest member of the alliance. While many of the former Soviet republics had delegations in attendance, Russia was noticeably absent. In fact, Russia had pulled out of its partnership with NATO only weeks earlier in protest over allied airstrikes in Yugoslavia.

*IMF.* After much trepidation throughout the first part of 1999, the IMF approved a \$4.5 billion loan to Russia to once again stave off economic collapse. "Approval of the loan by the IMF's board reflected Russia's geopolitical importance as a nuclear power rather than the belief that it has put its economy on a sound footing."<sup>21</sup> This IMF installment is clearly not suggestive of an improvement in Russian-American relations given the remarkable stresses placed upon that relationship in 1999; rather it transpired

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<sup>21</sup> Paul Blustein, "IMF Board Approves Russia Loan," *Washington Post*, 29 July 1999, sec. E, p. 3.

because it *had* to. To deny Russia the loan might have been the proverbial straw to break the already weakened camel's back.

*Other Factors.* Throughout 1999, U.S. pursuit of a National Missile Defense (NMD) system and associated willingness to abrogate the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, combined with Russia's continued refusal to ratify START II, all severely threatened the already turbulent and sensitive superpower relationship. Moreover, Russia's plans to deploy the Topol-M (a multiple-warhead, intercontinental ballistic missile), new military doctrine professing increased reliance upon tactical employment of nuclear weapons, and President Yeltsin's terse reminder from Beijing in December to the U.S. that Russia was still a nuclear weapons power took the relationship to a new low.

### **Analysis: Why the Decline?**

The brief embrace between Russia and the U.S. from 1991-93 appears to have been inspired by national self-interest as much as by a genuine rapprochement. "Russia was impelled by its domestic condition to seek outside assistance, and no country was better positioned to aid the new administration than the United States. Yeltsin made the transformation of Russia's economy his number one domestic priority."<sup>22</sup> Likewise, as the relationship began to transform in 1994-95 to one more of competition than cooperation, Russia focused on its own perceived national interests and sources of power in relation to U.S. power.

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<sup>22</sup> Blacker, 190.

Russia's very survival, given the fledgling democracy's decaying social, political, economic conditions throughout the 1990s, has remained its overarching national interest. "The content of such an interest encompasses the nation's territorial integrity, the preservation of its political institutions from external threat, and its history and culture."<sup>23</sup> For Russia, its weakened condition and mistrust of outsiders has transformed these elements into competitiveness ultimately at odds with Russia's true national interest: survival. Invaded countless times throughout recorded history, having lost a good portion of its Soviet-era territory in 1991, and feeling the dual pressure of NATO expansion from the West and Islamic fundamentalism from the south, Russia has naturally taken measures to counter these threats, perceived or real.

Furthermore, IMF loan packages with stringent requirements to implement specific fiscal reforms, along with the Clinton administration's resounding endorsement of Boris Yeltsin as Russia's best hope for reform, have left Russian politicians and citizens alike with the impression that Western/U.S. interests strongly influence, if not control, Russian political institutions.

Regarding Russia's history and culture as an element of the national interest, the mid-1990s rise of the Communist Party and of ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky are both attributable to a desire to recapture the security of the past to fill the present void, regardless of the type of system that provided it. These extreme elements in the Russian

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<sup>23</sup> Kenneth W. Thompson, *Traditions and Values in Politics and Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 87.

political arena, in their quest for power, frequently have attempted to shape Russian thinking by invoking such nationalistic ideas as pan-Slavism and centuries of oppression.

The historical trends in Russian-American relations from 1995-99 demonstrate Russia's engagement in a continuous process, however haphazard, to gain political leverage and enhance its prestige in the international system. "All political action represents an attempt to influence human behavior. . . . The process of gaining and preserving power and of maintaining at least a rough equilibrium with a potential aggressor goes on unceasingly."<sup>24</sup> Russia's efforts to these ends, rooted in the realist, political view of power, ironically are intended to balance its own power with that of its chief benefactor, the U.S.

Ultimately, Russia is faced with a choice between domestic and international perceptions of its prestige and assurance of its true national interest:

Russia's true national interests demand a pro-Western alignment and integration into the world economy. The ambitions and emotional needs of Russia's elite, however, pull in the opposite direction: away from the global economic order dominated by the industrial democracies and toward reliance on military power as well as rapprochement with countries that for one reason or another are hostile to the West. The latter course is alluring because catching up with the West militarily would be much easier for Russia than catching up economically.<sup>25</sup>

Fortunately, Russia's recent anti-Western sentiments and rhetoric concerning a lower nuclear threshold have not halted Russian-American bilateral efforts to reduce Cold War-level nuclear arsenals and prevent proliferation of the remnants and by-products of these arsenals through the CTR Program.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>25</sup> Pipes, 77.

## III

## CTR'S QUALIFIED SUCCESS: 1995-1999

Much like the greater realm of Russian-American relations, CTR enjoyed a period of relative euphoria from 1991-93 as the two former adversaries and the international community embraced the idea of molding a world containing far fewer nuclear warheads, delivery systems, and production facilities. As Nunn-Lugar moved toward implementation, however, a more pragmatic assessment ensued. Former Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA) illustrates this pragmatism by stating “. . . the United States and Russia have the awesome joint responsibility to dismantle the most powerful arsenals of destructive power in history. In spite of our inevitable differences, we will continue to share this responsibility for a long time to come.”<sup>26</sup>

CTR, while not a regime in and of itself, exists as a tangible means of carrying out the nonproliferation regime's intent and establishes an overt example of support for the regime. Indeed, “. . . U.S. and Russian progress in arms reductions helps shore up global support for antiproliferation methods. . . .”<sup>27</sup> CTR does this by providing funding, personnel, contracting, and assistance packages for the following treaties and programs: START, Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, Open Skies Treaty, Chemical Weapons Convention

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<sup>26</sup> Sam Nunn, foreword to *Dismantling the Cold War: U.S. Perspectives on the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program*, ed. John M. Shields and William C. Potter (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), xix.

<sup>27</sup> “The Future of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy,” *Arms Control Today* 27, no. 3 (May 1997) : 16.



(CWC), and confidence- and security-building measures (CSBM). CTR, while not fulfilling its entire potential over the last five years, has nevertheless achieved significant results consistent with the original goals of the program.

Since its inception, the CTR Program and parallel initiatives sponsored by the Departments of State, Energy and Commerce, have claimed notable accomplishments. Ongoing or recently completed technical work underwritten by these programs has been instrumental in meeting key post-Cold War U.S. objectives of arms reduction, nuclear security, nonproliferation, and environmental remediation.<sup>28</sup>

Additionally, CTR has provided the value-added benefit of providing a growing network of links between the respective governments, militaries, scientific laboratories, and private businesses of Russia and the U.S.

Consequently, the first part of this chapter traces the achievements and pitfalls of the CTR Program throughout the period of interest, 1995-99. These benefits and obstacles are measured using four evaluation criteria. The criteria for each year are aggregate funds obligated (in U.S. dollars) for CTR activities, the numbers of nuclear warheads and delivery systems dismantled/destroyed (data available biannually), the types of problems associated with the CTR program, and cooperation-promoting initiatives. In such a comprehensive program as CTR there exists a multitude of criteria. The four chosen criteria, however, give the most broad-based evaluation of the program, with cooperation measures being of primary importance to this paper. The closing part of

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<sup>28</sup> William C. Potter and John M. Shields, "Introduction: Assessing the Dismantlement Process," *Dismantling the Cold War: U.S. Perspectives on the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program*, ed. John M. Shields and William C. Potter, with a foreword by Senator Sam Nunn (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), 6.

this chapter then examines how institutional theory explains CTR's success where traditional balance of power politics falls short.

## 1995

*Funds Obligated.* Funding continually has been one of the most sensitive considerations for CTR, both for a cash-strapped Russian government as well as for a U.S. legislature in the midst of a military drawdown mentality. But CTR funding took off very ambitiously in 1995. Aggregate obligated funds for CTR projects in Russia rose from the February 1995 level of \$300 million to a fiscal year-end high of nearly \$500 million. These funds supported programs to eliminate strategic offensive arms, improve fissile material storage facilities, destroy chemical weapons, implement the Material Protection Control and Accounting (MPC&A) Program, and increase opportunities for military-to-military contacts.<sup>29</sup>

*Arms Reductions.* Data is presented biannually. See 1996 figures.

*Obstacles.* Despite the aforementioned \$200 million obligated CTR funding for Russia, several obstacles intervened to dampen further funding. First, the 1994 mid-term U.S. congressional elections brought a Republican majority to the House of Representatives for the first time in decades. Congress, therefore, was focused on the domestic agenda of its "Contract with America;" CTR was no longer a high priority.

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<sup>29</sup> Funding and associated projects for 1995 were obtained from the annual report by the Department of State, Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to the NIS, *FY1995: U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union*, (Washington, D.C., April 1996), 118.

There are many different agendas at work in U.S. congressional attitudes toward the CTR program. Some members of Congress have problems with U.S. foreign aid in general. Others do not wish to see federal monies spent on defense industry conversion abroad when they are not spent on industry conversion at home. Still others believe that defense budget dollars in particular should not be spent in such a nontraditional approach to defense.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, a mentality of linkage of CTR funding with acceptable Russian political and military behavior began to prevail in the U.S. legislature.

Similarly, the 1995 shift in Russian politics toward a more anti-Western sentiment cast CTR in a negative light. As Russian-American relations entered what some called a "cold peace," Russian critics of CTR claimed that the program amounted to U.S. domestic pork barrel politics.<sup>31</sup> Other Russian critics claimed that CTR was merely a clever ploy to strip an already weakened Russia of her last bastion of self-defense.

*Cooperation Initiatives.* By contrast, the CTR Program developed a host of programs contributing to increased cooperation, communication, and understanding between the U.S. and Russia. The programs included improved contact between the U.S. Strategic Command and the Russian Strategic Rocket Forces, a U.S.-Russian disaster-relief exercise, and delegation exchanges both to observe strategic-bomber destruction

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<sup>30</sup> Gloria Duffy, "Cooperative Threat Reduction in Perspective," in *Dismantling the Cold War: U.S. Perspectives on the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program*, ed. John M. Shields and William C. Potter, with a foreword by Senator Sam Nunn (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), 38.

<sup>31</sup> Vladimir A. Orlov, "Perspectives of Russian Decision-makers and Problems of Implementation," in *Dismantling the Cold War: U.S. Perspectives on the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program*, ed. John M. Shields and William C. Potter, with a foreword by Senator Sam Nunn (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), 38.

facilities as well as to participate in discussions on numerous defense issues.<sup>32</sup> Clearly, while state-level organs in both Russia and the U.S. concentrated on extracting political mileage from opposition to CTR, the specialists charged with implementing and executing the program continued on in a professional manner. Thus seeds of trust were sown which would facilitate CTR's continued success in the coming years.

### 1996

*Funds Obligated.* By the end of FY1996, Congress had obligated over \$567 million in CTR funding to Russia, a net increase of \$67 million from FY 1995. The majority of this funding was dedicated to strategic offensive arms elimination including disposition of solid and liquid rocket propellants; and sea launched ballistic missile (SLBM), heavy bomber, and SS-18 inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM) dismantlement. Other key funding areas included chemical weapons destruction, construction support of the fissile material storage facility in Mayak, Russia, expansion of defense and military contacts, and weapons storage security training for Ministry of Defense (MoD) personnel.<sup>33</sup>

*Arms Reductions.* According to START, each side is allowed a total of 6,000 warheads configured on 1,600 delivery systems consisting of the nuclear triad of ICBMs,

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<sup>32</sup> Department of State, Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to the NIS, *FY1995: U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union*, 117.

<sup>33</sup> CTR projects and funding for 1996 were obtained from the annual report by the Department of State, Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to the NIS, *FY1996: U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union*, (Washington, D.C., January 1997), 116-18.

SLBMs, and strategic bombers. In 1995-96 the Russians, with the assistance of CTR funding eliminated or dismantled 11 ICBMs with 62 warheads, 64 SLBMs with 64 warheads, and 16 bombers with 30 warheads.<sup>34</sup> The overall numbers of delivery systems and warheads reduced appear small relative to the size of the vast Russian nuclear arsenal. But Russia's simultaneous, herculean efforts under CTR to recover and safeguard/destroy over 3,000 strategic nuclear warheads inherited by Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine after the Soviet breakup place those figures in context.

*Obstacles.* As in previous years, CTR encountered obstacles from several origins including stiff opposition in the U.S. Congress, bureaucratic hindrances among the various Russian institutions responsible for CTR, and minor Russian objections over A&E procedures.

First, the Republican-controlled U.S. Congress now included chairmen of the committees with principle oversight of the CTR Program. "Republican members of Congress who had been unenthusiastic and sometimes hostile toward . . . cooperative threat reduction for countries of the former Soviet Union finally had the votes in their respective committees . . . to translate their concerns into law."<sup>35</sup> Once again, Congress cut deeply into CTR funding, insisting that further funding be linked to Russian

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<sup>34</sup> Compiled from *Nuclear Successor States of the Soviet Union: Status Report on Nuclear Weapons, Fissile Material, and Export Controls*, [report online] (Monterey: Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, March 1998), 11-18; available from <http://cns.miis.edu/reports/statrep.htm>; accessed 20 February 1999.

<sup>35</sup> Richard Combs, "U.S. Domestic Politics and the Nunn-Lugar Program," in *Dismantling the Cold War: U.S. Perspectives on the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program*, ed. John M. Shields and William C. Potter, with a foreword by Senator Sam Nunn (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), 50.

compliance with the Biological Warfare Convention (BWC of 1972), consequently ensuring that CTR's full potential remained untapped.

*Cooperation Initiatives.* Once again, the nucleus of CTR, distinct from the state-level, was comprised of on-site inspectors, scientists, delegations, and military personnel working together, exchanging ideas, and building rapport and trust.

Some of the activities at the operational-level in 1996 included three A&Es, a U.S.-Russian Theater Missile Defense (TMD) command-post exercise, military unit exchanges, and ship visits. In all, CTR funded over 135 defense and military contacts in the former Soviet Union in 1996.<sup>36</sup>

Another cooperation-promoting initiative deserving some merit was the laboratory-to-laboratory program in which scientists from Russia and the U.S. worked together in labs such as Chelabyinsk-70 in Russia or Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in the U.S. in order to solve CTR-related issues of mutual interest. This initiative has met with tremendous results, largely due to its employment of a "bottom-up" approach. "As a result of . . . interactions throughout the mid to late 1980s . . . U.S. and Soviet weapons scientists came into frequent contact and, . . . began to build extensive personal and institutional relationships."<sup>37</sup> A secondary benefit of the lab-to-

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<sup>36</sup> Department of State, Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to the NIS, *FY1996: U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union*, 113-17.

<sup>37</sup> Katherine E. Johnson, "Sustaining Nuclear Threat Reduction programs: The 'Bottom-Up' Approach," in *Dismantling the Cold War: U.S. Perspectives on the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program*, ed. John M. Shields and William C. Potter, with a foreword by Senator Sam Nunn (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), 240.

lab program, apart from its direct contribution to fissile material storage and safety, is this relationship-building approach to arms control.

### 1997-98

*Funds Obligated.* Beginning in 1997, given that Russia had reclaimed all nuclear warheads from Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine, CTR funding now began to flow increasingly in Russia's direction. In FY1997 the total obligation for CTR in Russia amounted to \$302 million bringing the aggregate to nearly \$865 million. Significant increases in funding occurred in the Chemical Weapons Destruction, Fissile Materials Storage, and Fissile Materials Containers Programs whereas the funding for Strategic Arms Elimination had leveled off.<sup>38</sup>

A significant linkage issue surfaced regarding the Chemical Weapons Destruction Program in 1997. Even though the Russian Duma had still not ratified START II, the CWC was ratified in November 1997. "The CWC approval was conditioned on Western aid for chemical weapons destruction."<sup>39</sup> CTR funding in this area had produced another dividend in accordance with the program's original purpose.

In 1998, CTR's successful funding to Russia continued, obligating over \$155 million with funding in the relatively new area of converting Russia's Plutonium-

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<sup>38</sup> Figures obtained from the annual report by the Department of State, Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to the NIS, *FY1997: U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union*, (Washington, D.C., January 1998), 125-27.

<sup>39</sup> Jones and McDonough, 34.

producing reactors to the non-producing variety. Overall Russia had now received over \$1 billion in CTR funding.<sup>40</sup> CTR remained alive and well at the end of FY1998.

*Arms Reductions.* Russia made considerable progress in the area of Strategic Arms Reduction in 1997-98. Beginning with ICBMs, Russia dismantled or destroyed 11 launchers and 90 strategic warheads. Russian bomber dismantlement efforts yielded 15 less launch platforms over the two-year span but the numbers of associated warheads actually increased by almost 250. This drastic rise in bomber warheads was not an actual production or deployment increase, but rather changes in accounting (instrumentation error) under START II rules. In the SLBM arena, the 1998-level of SLBM launchers stood at 384, down 280 from the 1996 inventory along with a net reduction of 672 SLBM warheads.<sup>41</sup> These major cuts in SLBMs and their companion warheads were facilitated by additional Department of Defense (DoD) dismantlement contracts in FY 1998.

*Obstacles.* Because the initial learning curve was steep and the Russian-American working relationship still relatively new, CTR's early years (1995-96) produced cases of reluctant participation, bureaucratic resistance to change, and friction. In 1997-98, however, the CTR Program advanced relatively obstacle-free.

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<sup>40</sup> Department of State, Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to the NIS, *FY1998: U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union*, (Washington, D.C., January 1999), 156-58.

<sup>41</sup> Compiled from *Nuclear Successor States of the Soviet Union: Status Report on Nuclear Weapons, Fissile Material, and Export Controls*, 11-18.



*Cooperation Initiatives.* Cooperation initiatives remained a strong suit of CTR throughout 1997-98 chiefly through the use of military-to-military contacts. "In FY1998, the CTR Program funded over 240 defense and military contact events in the NIS . . .<sup>42</sup>

Eugene Habiger, of the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC) witnessed one such contact involving General Yakovlev, Commander-in-Chief of Russian Strategic Rocket Forces, while touring U.S. nuclear facilities in March 1998:

General Yakovlev first saw the ICBM missile silos. I wanted to show him that we were totally and completely open; that we had nothing that we wanted to keep from them. The primary purpose in taking him to Bangor, Washington, to the SSBN [nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine] base area, in addition to taking him in the Ohio-class submarine and showing him the quality of the people and condition of our equipment, was to take him to the nuclear weapon storage site there, to show him how the U.S. Marines guard that facility. There was an ulterior method to my madness, that the Russians would reciprocate. And they did, in less than ninety days. I went back over, and they took me to a Delta submarine base. And again, it's to build that confidence.<sup>43</sup>

With more frequent military contacts of this nature, the "bottom-up" approach once again proved to be the fertile ground in which CTR would thrive.

## 1999

*Funds Obligated.* Total obligated funds to Russia under CTR exceeded \$1.2 billion in FY 1999, a net increase from 1998 of \$204 million. Over 85 percent of all

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<sup>42</sup> Department of State, Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to the NIS, *FY1998: U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union*, 149.

<sup>43</sup> Account of Eugene Habiger, "U.S. Exchanges with the Russian Military," in *Strategic Stability and U.S.-Russian Relations: Report of the Twelfth Protocol Meeting between the Center for International Security and Cooperation and the Committee of Scientists for Global Security Held in Moscow 7-9 June 1999*, ed. Taira Koybaeva [report online] (Stanford: Stanford University, December 1999), 24; available from <http://www.stanford.edu/group/CISAC>; accessed 30 March 2000.

appropriations for CTR in FY 1999 “. . . was earmarked for Russia.”<sup>44</sup> Despite a rocky year politically due to Kosovo, Chechnya, U.S. National Missile Defense, and the still unratified START II in the Russian Duma, CTR funding remained unmolested.

*Arms Reductions.* By October 1999, the CTR program aided in bringing the Russian nuclear arsenal levels into compliance with START I. Thus far, the CTR program has enabled Russia to “. . . deactivate 1,538 nuclear warheads; destroy 254 intercontinental ballistic missiles, 30 submarine-launched ballistic missiles and 40 heavy bombers; and eliminate 50 silos for long-range missiles and 148 launchers for submarine-launched missiles.”<sup>45</sup> Still, much work remains as the Russian Duma ratified START II in April 2000.

*Obstacles.* Remarkably, the political freeze of 1999 has had little effect on CTR's execution in the field. “Cooperation has evolved and strengthened over the years in DoD's interaction with the Russian ministries administering the CTR program . . .”<sup>46</sup> Moreover, in June 1999 Russia and the U.S. extended CTR for seven more years.

*Cooperation Initiatives.* Successful programs and initiatives designed to promote the cooperative aspect of CTR, such as defense and military contacts, A&Es, exchanges and visits, and lab-to-lab programs, remained in place throughout 1999. However,

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<sup>44</sup> Department of State, Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to the NIS, *FY1999: U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union*, (Washington, D.C., January 2000), 178.

<sup>45</sup> Ronald E. Powaski, “Russia: The Nuclear Menace Within,” *Current History* 98, no. 630 (October 1999) : 343.

<sup>46</sup> Department of State, Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to the NIS, *FY1999: U.S. Government Assistance to and Cooperative Activities with the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union*, 178.

progress in this critical area currently may have reached a plateau due to diverging interests. The U.S. has actively sought to help Russia safeguard, contain, and control a vast nuclear arsenal, which it is economically powerless to sustain. "On the Russian side, however, there is no overriding interest in greater transparency for nuclear weapons and fissile material stocks. Russia apparently believes it will bear the larger burden in a transparency arrangement and gain little by comparison in return."<sup>47</sup>

### **Analysis: Institutional Theory, Epistemic Communities, and CTR**

This paper's chief premise contends that the decline in Russian-American state-level relations due to balance of power politics did not significantly affect the CTR Program from 1995-99, owing both to mutual Russian-American security interests as well as the formal and informal connections imbedded in the institution of CTR. The first part of this chapter clearly establishes CTR's record of accomplishments in a time of withering Russian-American political relations.

*Realism.* Realist theory suggests that a cooperation-based program such as CTR would not be a viable option in the conditions of late-1990s Russian-American relations:

States will not be able to cooperate in security relations because cooperating states chance being exploited and risking national security. Furthermore, states will not wish to cooperate because the focus on balances of power means states must be worried about relative gains—that other states will gain more from cooperation than they themselves do."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Liu Suping, *Working Paper: A Verification for Warhead Control* (Stanford: Stanford University, January 2000), 5; available from <http://www.stanford.edu/group/CISAC>; accessed 5 April 2000.

<sup>48</sup> Celeste A. Wallander, *Mortal Friends, Best Enemies: German-Russian Cooperation after the Cold War*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999) 4.

While elements of this perspective exist in Russian and U.S. thinking, particularly within the respective legislatures, balance of power does not solely account for CTR's continuing success. Indeed, the numbers of nuclear warheads dismantled or destroyed; the extension of CTR through 2006; and, most importantly, the operational-level cooperation achieved in support of CTR all clearly point to another explanation.

*Institutional Theory.* Celeste Wallander, in her recent examination of Russian-German relations entitled *Mortal Friends, Best Enemies*, provides that explanation. At the core of Wallander's argument is the notion that "... the international system is characterized by institutions of various types. Although institutions cannot force states to cooperate or act contrary to their interests, they enable states to cooperate when it is difficult yet in their interests to do so."<sup>49</sup> Institutional theory helps to answer the "why does CTR work?" question.

CTR is such an international institution as Wallander describes, albeit, one that exists in a bilateral context between the U.S. and Russia (or the U.S. and Belarus, Kazakhstan, or Ukraine in the other cases). Moreover, CTR has facilitated significant arms reduction cooperation where conflicting state-level political interests such as NATO expansion, the conflict in Chechnya, and U.S. National Missile Defense render that cooperation problematic at best.

Necessary in any institutional theory of security relations are three fundamental requirements. It must identify the conditions in which the institution affects security

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 5.

relations; explain how the institution affects states' security problems; and describe the relationship between the security strategy, institution, and outcomes.<sup>50</sup>

First, there are three conditions that CTR must, and does, fulfill in order to affect Russian-American security relations. CTR must be based upon an established, binding, legal framework, which it has been. The program was designed to support implementation of INF, CFE, START, CWC, Open Skies and other bilateral treaties between Russia and the U.S. Additionally, both parties to the CTR Program must be willing participants. Despite the occasional, heated anti-CTR rhetoric emanating from Russian and American politicians, both countries have never wavered from participation in the program as evidenced by the June 1999 extension of CTR until 2006. Finally, mutual interests must be present for CTR to work. Those mutual interests are the prevention of the spread of WMDs and the security assurance gained through mutual and transparent arms reductions.

The second requirement of institutional theory dictates that it examine how CTR affects Russian and American security problems. The three principal, CTR-related, security problems for Russia and the U.S. consist of compliance with bilateral treaty obligations, nonproliferation of WMD, and prevention of an asymmetric national defense capability. CTR has provided, the necessary funding, equipment, contracting (in both the U.S. and Russia), and personnel to carry out arms reductions under the various bilateral treaties. Furthermore, CTR has reduced the threat of WMD proliferation, particularly in Russia, vis-à-vis enhanced export controls, fissile materials and weapons storage,

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 17.

accountability procedures, and retraining of unemployed nuclear weapons experts to avert their flight to possible nuclear rogue nations. At the same time, CTR has enhanced transparency, reciprocity, and confidence that both sides are in compliance with the arms control regime through A&Es, lab-to-lab programs, and military exchanges such as that of General Yakovlev in 1998.

The ability to define the relationship between security strategies, institutions, and outcomes is institutional theory's final prerequisite. The U.S. security strategy in reference to nuclear weapons reductions with Russia is best stated in DTRA's *Strategic Plan 2000*:

The United States seeks to reduce the threat from weapons of mass destruction in a number of ways, particularly through treaty and non-treaty efforts to control, safeguard and eliminate existing weapons. As the focal point for implementing U.S. treaty inspection, escort and monitoring activities, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency will execute current arms control agreements and prepare for proposed ones.<sup>51</sup>

The relationship between this strategy and the institution of the CTR Program, as previously alluded to, is found in CTR's mission to operationalize the bilateral arms control treaty requirements, which then lead to tangible outcomes of verifiable weapons and warhead reductions, improved weapons and fissile materials security, and practices and procedures designed to circumvent proliferation of WMDs.

The relationship between security strategy, institution, and outcomes on the Russian side is analogous that of the U.S., although specific motives may differ. In addition to maintaining a stable strategic balance and thwarting proliferation, Russia's

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<sup>51</sup> Defense Threat Reduction Agency, *Strategic Plan 2000* (Washington, D.C., 2000), 6.

motives also point toward the secondary benefits of economic assistance needed to put the WMD "genie back into the bottle."

What were the effects of the institution of CTR on the security strategies of Russia and the U.S.? In *Mortal Friends, Best Enemies*, Wallander cites three specific effects of institutions on Russian-German security strategies, including "...monitoring activity and providing information, in specifying rules and limiting bargaining, and in altering the costs and benefits of alternative courses of action through resources and norms."<sup>52</sup> The observed effects of CTR on the U.S. and Russian security strategy in this case are similar, but with several slight differences.

1. Monitoring activity and providing information. CTR provided a mutual instrument to monitor treaty activity and to gather (and provide) confidence-building information, which then could be reported back to policy decision-makers. A&Es provide a useful example of this effect. American teams from DTRA frequently conduct A&Es of CTR-provided equipment such as aerial photographic equipment or handheld radiation detectors, checking for proper utilization, maintenance and accountability by the Russians. This process provides information both vertically to U.S. policymakers as well as horizontally to the Russian counterparts, thereby creating assurances on both sides.
2. Enforcing rules and limiting bargaining. Although rules are usually clearly outlined in the applicable treaty, arms control inspectors and their escorting delegations sometimes disagree on the interpretation of what types of weapons

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<sup>52</sup> Wallander, 194.

and equipment are subject to inspection, which areas are accessible, or even how inspection schedules are executed. CTR and its foundation in the arms control regime, however, provide strong incentives for resolution of such problems.

3. Altering cost-benefits to facilitate compromise. CTR, again closely enmeshed in the arms control regime, provides a normative basis for actions by representatives on both sides. At times of political difference, when the prospect of cooperation seems difficult, it is the normative basis that prevents renegotiation and facilitates compromise. The members of this institution may not always be able to obtain or achieve what their government *wants*, but often settle for what they can actually *get* given these normative constraints.
4. Demonstration effects. When CTR operations yield success, the results do not go unnoticed by Russian and American policymakers. "U.S.-Russian cooperation on the Nunn-Lugar program speeds the disarmament process, enhances confidence and transparency in this effort, and provides a unique milieu for building understanding and trust between the two states."<sup>53</sup> START II's seven-year extension to 2006 clearly illustrates this notion that success breeds success.

*CTR: An Epistemic Community?* The paper's subordinate premise avows that the benefits of CTR-based, direct contacts significantly increase the likelihood of successful outcomes. This helps to answer the "how does CTR work?" question. Wallander makes

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<sup>53</sup> Evgenii P. Maslin, "Russian-U.S. Cooperation in Nuclear Weapons Safety," in *Dismantling the Cold War: U.S. Perspectives on the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program*, ed. John M. Shields and William C. Potter, with a foreword by Senator Sam Nunn (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), 145.



the link between institutions and transnational links clear. "Institutions will be effective in producing security cooperation when they have the appropriate forms for solving the relevant security problem and when there are formal or informal connections among them."<sup>54</sup> Such formal and informal connections, if motivated by certain mutual beliefs, ideas, and goals, make up epistemic communities.

An epistemic community is a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue area. Although an epistemic community may consist of professionals from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, they have (1) a shared set of normative and principled beliefs, . . . (2) shared causal beliefs, . . . (3) shared notions of validity . . . and (4) a common policy enterprise . . .<sup>55</sup>

A large, complex, and diverse community such as the one supporting CTR is difficult to categorize on the whole as a true epistemic community. But smaller epistemic communities exist *within* the greater institution of CTR.

The first epistemic community is made up of Russian and American scientists working in the lab-to-lab program. The program enables these scientists to collaborate on issues such as peaceful scientific endeavors, information exchange, and nonproliferation issues. "Because the lab-to-lab program involves individuals with shared interests and similar backgrounds, common goals are easier both to identify and to implement. No project was . . . undertaken that is not a priority objective for both . . . sides."<sup>56</sup> These

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<sup>54</sup> Wallander, 40.

<sup>55</sup> Peter M. Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination," *International Organization* 46, 1 (Winter 1992), 3.

<sup>56</sup> Johnson, 245.

scientists' shared-values, beliefs, goals, and notion of the program's validity are clear evidence to view them as an epistemic community. As such, the epistemic community of the CTR lab-to-lab program has developed into a formidable transnational alliance, influencing Russian and American policy decision makers based upon cooperation that has been relatively unscathed by the greater, state-level political relationship.

Today, although there are serious differences between the United States and Russia in the areas of non-proliferation and arms control, Nunn-Lugar promotes progress on both fronts in ways that improve both sides' national security, and thus appears increasingly immune to disagreements in both areas.<sup>57</sup>

The other epistemic community that has been taken shape vis-à-vis the CTR Program is that of the military arms control inspectors from DTRA and the corresponding Russian Nuclear Risk Reduction Center (NRRC). This epistemic community shares norms and values from years of service to the respective states. The military background, training, and experience all produce a corporateness that extends across national boundaries. While orders, oaths, and loyalty to one's own state produce natural limits to this corporateness, it is ironically the similarity of these values that also make possible increased cooperation. This community also shares a similar set of causal beliefs inculcated from the intensive training that arms control representatives on each side must undergo prior to actual inspection activities. There is also an overall, mutual sense of validity—a "knowing" in terms of prioritizing and evaluating CTR-related issues. Finally, the two sides possess a common set of practices and goals in the context of CTR.

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<sup>57</sup> Todd Perry, "Cooperative Threat Reduction's Quiet Revolution: Joint U.S.-Russian Security Projects Create Stability in the Midst of Uncertainty," *The Monitor: Nonproliferation, Demilitarization, and Arms Control* 4, no. 2-3 (Spring-Summer 1998) : 57.

Again, like the scientists in the lab-to-lab program, the military epistemic community has been a significant factor in CTR's execution. Indeed, "... DOD's military-to-military contacts are designed to promote larger national security objectives . . . and because the individuals involved have shared interests and . . . similar backgrounds, programs of mutual interest are easy to identify and pursue."<sup>58</sup>

In summary, the institution of CTR, while not completely immune from the effects of balance of power politics by Russia and the U.S., has continually provided opportunities for cooperation throughout the 1995-99 period of interest. As Peter Haas asserts, "no single theoretical approach . . . taken alone offers an adequate explanation of international coordination."<sup>59</sup> Thus, that CTR has produced epistemic communities in the scientific and military arenas, capable of establishing patterns of cooperation in the face of uncooperative posturing by their respective states, also supports the institutional approach in evaluating CTR's success.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 248.

<sup>59</sup> Peter M. Haas, "Conclusion: Epistemic Communities, World Order, and the Creation of a Reflective Research Program," *International Organization* 46, 1 (Winter 1992), 368.

## IV

## CONCLUSION

Consider the December 1999 scenario again. The war in Chechnya approaches its peak, both in the intensity of operations as well as in the international condemnation of the conflict. Again, the U.S. team from DTRA arrives in Moscow. This time, however, American embassy personnel *and* representatives from the Russian MoD greet the team. The Russian officer-in-charge tells the American team chief, "I am sorry about the recent difficulties between our governments, but it is good to see you again, my esteemed colleague. Let us continue on to our meeting site. There is much work to be done to build upon our previous accomplishments." This scenario is much closer to reality than the introductory scenario due to a combination of the mutual interests at stake in CTR, the cooperative atmosphere generated through CTR as an institution, and the epistemic communities that comprise the CTR program.

Hence, the analyses of the decline in Russian-American relations and the simultaneous continued success of CTR point to several general conclusions.

First, the decline of Russian-American relations in the latter half of the 1990s is well documented. This decline is largely attributable to a weak Russian state making unilateral choices in an attempt to rectify the power imbalance between itself and the U.S. Factors influencing Russia's choices include unilateral power shifts by the West such as NATO expansion and PFP exercises in the NIS, a Russian citizenry dissatisfied with the country's domestic condition and low international prestige, and the perception that the U.S. exerts *de facto* economic control over the Russian government. Ironically, Russia's

actions to enhance its international power and prestige have detracted from its true national interest: survival and integration into the international economy.

Second, while balance of power politics in the late-1990s make prospects for Russian-American cooperation less likely, CTR is one area in which the two states have cooperated, albeit with occasional difficulties:

Nunn-Lugar programs are especially important because cooperative nuclear security projects serve as the anchor for the increasingly strained US-Russian security relationship. However, even though military professionals in both countries support the Nunn-Lugar efforts, increasingly inward-looking national legislatures periodically attempt to scuttle the cooperative security effort.<sup>60</sup>

Still, the CTR program has continued on despite the sometimes obstinate domestic legislative agendas in both countries.

Third, CTR is a bilateral institution that facilitates cooperation during the difficult periods of state-level relations. CTR accomplishes this by reducing uncertainty and providing information to state decision makers, providing a means of resolving issue-oriented differences, establishing a normative basis to negotiate and achieve compromise, and demonstrating to the respective governments that aspects of the bilateral relationship can and do indeed work.

Finally, as a subset of institutional theory, the concept of epistemic communities further explains how CTR increases cooperation and security for Russia and the U.S. For CTR, the two epistemic communities of scientists and military arms inspectors have

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<sup>60</sup> *The Nunn-Lugar Programs: Controlling Nuclear Weapons and Materials in Russia*, [briefing online] (Union of Concerned Scientists, 2000), 1; available from <http://www.ucsusa.org/arms/nunn.lugar.html>; accessed 29 March 2000.

furthered the program's overall progress through their networks of formal and informal contacts with their counterparts.

CTR contains both inherent strengths and limitations. Among its strengths are its ability to survive, thus far, the turbulent relations between Russia and the U.S., its validity of purpose founded upon the bilateral arms control treaties, and the epistemic communities approach of building "bottom-up" cooperative relationships.

CTR's limitations include its susceptibility to Russian and American domestic political maneuvering, the common perception in the U.S. that it is merely foreign aid to Russia, and the perception in Russia that it requires too much transparency in the sensitive area of nuclear weapons secrets. Moreover, the extent to which the influx of hard currency enhances Russian cooperation is unclear. The amounts of money are not so large as to be significant on the national scale; but to the employees of CTR-related ministries and agencies who are being paid and have meaningful work, CTR funding may provide an incentive for cooperative behavior.

Overall, CTR appears to have a bright short-term future with its recent extension through 2006. If this institution can continue to maximize the benefits of its inherent operational-level relationships, and Russian-American relations do not deteriorate toward the level of a "cold peace," then CTR will not only continue to reduce the threat from WMDs, but also can serve as an outstanding example of cooperative security for the entire international community.

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